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# old to gold

Learn how to spruce up your old furniture with restoration tips and tricks

Text Tracy Tang



Featuring the Forum bookshelves from Dorel, available at Joynthe.com

Nowadays, it's not uncommon to hear talk about green practices and recycling, and no where else have these efforts manifested into more beautiful objects than with restored furniture. Filled with history, charm and undeniable nostalgia for salvaged furniture retailers, it is a business which is truly a labour of love. From rescuing old and damaged pieces and spiffing them up to give them a new lease of life, here are some tips and tricks of the trade that we've picked up from these furniture restoration experts!

## Salvaging

Traditional woodworking usually employs the use of hardwoods. These woods are solid and highly durable so throwing them away is a real pity. Old wooden planks salvaged from dilapidated houses, abandoned boats and railway tracks can be restored and supported with sturdy materials such as iron or steel to make unique furniture pieces with strong characters.

Similarly, old fabrics such as denim from well-worn jeans can also be recycled to upholster playful and casual furniture pieces. So, think twice before tossing that old pair out.



## Boon or bane?

**Old pieces of furniture may harbour more than just a shabby chic look! Before purchasing, you may want to check (if possible) who last owned the furniture piece, how old it is and tell-tale signs of:**

- Pests such as bed bugs and termites
- Mould and mildew
- Shoddy workmanship
- Rickety frames
- Hastily glued pieces

**While surface damage such as scratches, dents, tears and stains all can be remedied, poor workmanship is harder to fix even with great D-I-Y skills. Look for quality in used pieces, such as solid construction for the frames since upholstery can be easily replaced.**

## Repainting and improvising

Sometimes, imagination is the key to creating something new out of something old. Furniture with missing elements can be given a new purpose and look through simple techniques such as spray painting them with vibrant shades and then adding your own unique design as a finishing touch.



Mismatched pieces can go wonderfully well together as well with some D-I-Y knowledge. For pieces that don't fit their actual function, you can improvise and look for ways to combine them to breathe a new lease of life into vintage furnishings.